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**WHAT PRODUCTIVE USE CAN I MAKE OF ANGER?**

**FIRST & FOREMOST!!!** Recognize your anger *before* enacting it. Do it verbally, to yourself: "I am angry! Why? Let me define for myself what has produced my feeling."  
**ONLY THEN CAN YOU CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING MENU...**

1. Enact it via an assertion. An assertion is a *nonassaultive* sharing with someone that you are angry with him or her. It is best confined to one-on-one encounters (i.e., avoid it when others are nearby). The words of the assertion *always* begin with "I." Be very careful to remove all assaultive features from your tone of voice or its volume. Let there be no *contempt* whatever.  
Example. "I find myself angry (irritated, annoyed, pissed, enraged, frustrated... depending on the circumstance and the intensity of your feeling) that you would describe me to our boss as 'an ineffectual boozier,' as I learned earlier today that you have done. Why this should anger me is too obvious to merit further discussion. But it is so slanderous that I conclude I must consider you hostile *a priori* in every dealing we must have with each other in future. If you persuade me in any single such instance that I should defer or void my bias about you, then, of course, I shall. This in the way of 'fair warning.' To use Hamlet's words, "For though I am not splenitive and rash, yet have I something in me dangerous, which let thy wiseness fear."  
Obviously this is an extreme example. Most affronts are much less gross. Your assertion should be modified accordingly. "I am annoyed that you made no greeting or even eye-contact today when I arrived. Perhaps you are angry with me. If so, please explain, and I'll make amends if I can understand in the way that you do the fault that you find in me."
2. Make a conscious decision to tolerate your anger without enactment. **YOU MUST VERBALIZE THIS DECISION TO YOURSELF**, which makes of it just that, a decision.
3. Entertain in your mind a fantasy of revenge. This can be as violent as is needed to be satisfying, because the one who has angered you is never going to know. **NEVER REVEAL TO SOMEONE THAT YOU HAVE FANTASIZED ABOUT A VENGEFUL ACTION TOWARD THEM.** Such an enactment is *for your mind only*. Almost always as you begin to linger on the fantasy you will begin inwardly to laugh, because the thought of its taking place in reality is so ridiculous. Of course, a psychotic person, who cannot distinguish fantasy from reality, should never be encouraged to manage anger in this way.
4. Displace, by conscious and deliberate decision, the angry energy in another direction. For example, as you are going door-to-door on behalf of your favorite candidate for Sheriff, a person answering your knock makes a racist comment about another of the candidates: you choose to answer by saying, "Well, you'll excuse me; I must get on to as many voters as possible."
5. Give a command. This choice is reserved for special circumstances, and it has two rules: it must be very brief; you must be prepared to take action immediately if it is not obeyed.  
Example. You and a group of young physicians that you are mentoring are listening at the bedside to a patient's description of having been molested in childhood, one of the physicians answers his mobile phone and engages the caller in conversation: you say simply and quietly, "Stop." He does, and the listening to the patient continues. Had he not stopped, you were prepared to say to the patient, "Forgive us, but we must take a short break. We will be back shortly because we very much want to hear more of the distress that you have suffered." During the break you dismiss the physician from further participation in the group. **AN "EMPTY" COMMAND IS A THREAT NOT A COMMAND.**